

# IOWA BIRD LIFE

---

Fall 1992 Volume 62 Number 4



IOWA ORNITHOLOGISTS' UNION

# IOWA BIRD LIFE

Fall 1992

Volume 62, Number 4

## CONTENTS

---

COMMON GROUND-DOVE AT CEDAR RAPIDS .....	93
<i>Jim Fuller</i>	
ICELAND GULLS IN IOWA.....	95
<i>Thomas H. Kent</i>	
LATE FALL AND WINTER BIRDING ALONG THE MISSISSIPPI RIVER IN EAST-CENTRAL IOWA.....	99
<i>Peter C. Petersen</i>	
FIELD REPORTS--SUMMER 1992.....	104
<i>James J. Dinsmore</i>	
NESTING SANDHILL CRANES AT OTTER CREEK MARSH, TAMA COUNTY.....	112
<i>Don Poggensee</i>	
PACIFIC LOON AT PLEASANT CREEK .....	113
<i>Jim Fuller</i>	
SABINE'S GULLS AT THE QUAD CITIES.....	114
<i>Randall Pinkston</i>	
INTERACTIONS BETWEEN A SNOW GOOSE AND A CANADA GOOSE.....	116
<i>Matt C. Kenne</i>	
SWAINSON'S HAWK FALLOUT IN CHEROKEE COUNTY.....	117
<i>Dick Bierman</i>	
I.O.U. BUSINESS.....	118
<i>Business Meeting, 16 May 1992</i>	
BOOK REVIEW.....	119
<i>Birds of Missouri</i>	
FRONT COVER: Young Sandhill Crane at Otter Creek Marsh, Tama County, 7 June 1992. Photograph by Don Poggensee, Ida Grove.	
INSIDE BACK COVER: Editorial Staff, Subscription/Membership Information, Instructions to Authors, Officers, Board of Directors, Standing Committees.	
BACK COVER: Meeting Dates, Report Deadlines, Birdline, Materials Available.	
Copyright 1992 Iowa Ornithologists' Union	



The IOWA ORNITHOLOGISTS' UNION, founded in 1923, encourages interest in the identification, study, and protection of birds in Iowa and seeks to unite those who have these interests in common. *Iowa Bird Life* and *I.O.U. News* are quarterly publications of the Union.

---

## EDITORIAL STAFF

James J. Dinsmore, Editor, 4024 Arkansas Drive, Ames, IA 50010

Carl J. Bendorf, Spring and Fall Field Reports Editor, 845 Cypress Ct., Iowa City, IA 52245

James J. Dinsmore, Summer Field Reports Editor, 4024 Arkansas Dr., Ames, IA 50010

James L. Fuller, Fall Field Reports Editor, 6 Longview Knoll, RR 6, Iowa City, IA 52240

Thomas H. Kent, Spring and Fall Field Reports Editor, 211 Richards St., Iowa City, IA 52246

W. Ross Silcock, Christmas Bird Count & Winter Field Reports Editor, Box 300, Tabor, IA 51653

## SUBSCRIPTION/MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION

Institutions may subscribe to *Iowa Bird Life* for \$15 per year. Individuals may join the Iowa Ornithologists' Union according to the following membership classes: Regular (\$15); Regular as spouse or minor child of another Regular member without publications (\$4 first additional family member, \$2 each additional family member); Contributing (\$15 plus any additional tax-deductible contribution to the I.O.U.); and Life (\$300 as single payment or \$75 for each of four years). Members will also receive the quarterly *I.O.U. News* and are eligible to vote and hold office in the Union. Send subscriptions, membership payments, or address changes to Pam Allen, 1601 Pleasant St., West Des Moines, IA 50265.

## INSTRUCTIONS TO AUTHORS

Original manuscripts, notes, letters (indicate if for publication), editorials, and other materials relating to birds and bird finding in Iowa should be sent to the editor. Accepted manuscripts will generally be published promptly, depending on space available, with the following absolute deadlines: 15 November for the Winter issue; 15 February for the Spring issue; 15 May for the Summer issue; and 15 July for the Fall issue. Most manuscripts will be refereed. All material should be typed double-spaced or hand printed in ink on 8 1/2 by 11 inch paper. Authors should pattern their style after a current issue of the journal. If you want more detailed guidelines or advice regarding the appropriateness of your topic for *Iowa Bird Life*, send a self-addressed stamped envelope to the editor. Manuscripts may also be submitted on computer disk (Word 4.0 for Macintosh or compatible programs). Please submit one printed copy of the manuscript with the disk.

## OFFICERS OF THE IOWA ORNITHOLOGISTS' UNION

Ann M. Barker, President (1993), 25368 250th Street, Princeton, IA 52768

Robert Cecil, Vice-President (1993), 1315 41st St., Des Moines, IA 50311

Hilda Sickels, Secretary (1994), 4002 Ashby, Des Moines, IA 50310

Pam Allen, Treasurer (1994), 1601 Pleasant St., West Des Moines, IA 50265

Other members of the Board of Directors: Eloise Armstrong (1994), Richard Hollis (1994), Diane Porter (1993), Mark Proescholdt (1993), and Harold White (1993).

## STANDING COMMITTEES

**Publications:** Peter C. Petersen (chair), Ann M. Barker, Dennis Carter, David C. Edwards, John Fleckenstein.

**Records:** Thomas H. Kent (secretary), Eugene Armstrong, Tanya Bray, Robert Cecil, Ray Cummins,, Francis L. Moore, Mark Proescholdt.

**Membership:** Jim Sinclair (chair), Pam Allen, Mary Jo Hartogh, Ann Johnson, Diane C. Porter.

**Library/Historical:** James J. Dinsmore (chair), Thomas H. Kent, Darwin Koenig, James P. Sandrock, Hank Zaletel.



## UPCOMING MEETINGS OF IOWA ORNITHOLOGISTS' UNION

\* 14-16 May 1993 , Keosauqua

### FIELD REPORTS

Anyone observing birds in Iowa is encouraged to report their findings on a quarterly basis to the Field Reports editors. Sample reporting and documentation forms suitable for duplication are available from the editor (send self-addressed stamped envelope to Jim Dinsmore, 4024 Arkansas Dr., Ames, IA 50010). An article describing the reporting process is also available.

Deadlines for receipt of field reports are as follows:

\*Winter (Dec, Jan, Feb)--3 March (W. Ross Silcock, Box 300, Tabor, IA 51653)

\*Spring (Mar, Apr, May)--3 June (Thomas H. Kent, 211 Richards St., Iowa City, IA 52246)

\*Summer (Jun, Jul)--3 August (James J. Dinsmore, 4024 Arkansas Dr., Ames, IA 50010)

\*Fall (Aug, Sep, Oct, Nov)--3 December (Thomas H. Kent, 211 Richards St., Iowa City, IA 52246)

### CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT

\*Deadline for receipt of reports: 15 January. For forms and instructions write: W. Ross Silcock, Box 300, Tabor, IA 51653.

### IOWA BIRDLINE 319-338-9881

The birdline is a recorded summary of interesting recent bird sightings in Iowa. At the end of the report you can leave a message and report recent sightings. Be sure to give your name and phone number as well as the location of the bird and date seen. Call in as soon as possible after sighting a rare bird. Jim Fuller checks the reports daily and updates the recording on Monday, so make sure Sunday sightings are reported by Sunday night.

### I.O.U. NEWS

Send items of interest for the newsletter to the editors (J. Hank and Linda Zaletel, 715 West St., Colo, IA 50056).

### MATERIALS AVAILABLE

The following materials may be obtained by writing the editorial office (Iowa Bird Life, 4024 Arkansas Dr., Ames, IA 50010):

\*Order form for back issues of *Iowa Bird Life*: send self-addressed stamped envelope.

\*Field Checklist of Iowa Birds--1992 Edition: 6 for \$1.00, postpaid. Also available at annual meetings.

### REPORTING NEBRASKA BIRDS

Sightings of Nebraska birds, including those within the Nebraska portion of DeSoto N.W.R., should be reported to Loren and Babs Padelford, 1405 Little John Road, Bellevue, NE 68005. Formats for reporting and documentation are the same as for Iowa. The Nebraska Bird Line, available 24 hours a day, is 402-292-5325. Iowa birders are encouraged to report their Nebraska sightings to this number.

### ADDRESS CHANGES

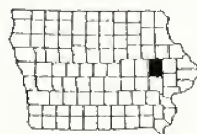
Please send address changes/corrections to Pam Allen, 1601 Pleasant St., West Des Moines, IA 50265.

ISSN 0021-0455

# COMMON GROUND-DOVE AT CEDAR RAPIDS

JIM FULLER

Weir Nelson, of Cedar Rapids, called the Iowa Birdline on 19 October 1991 to report a Varied Thrush, and also mentioned that he had received a call about a Common Ground-Dove somewhere near Mohawk Park. He called again on the 23rd with detailed information about a second sighting. The



next morning, I became reacquainted with the bird's discoverer, Sam Dunkle, an Oregonian visiting his mother in Cedar Rapids. While a University of Iowa student, Sam was instrumental in the founding of the Iowa City Bird Club in 1975. Together, we searched for the bird in a weedy area near the Cedar River just east of Mohawk Park. During the onset of a thunderstorm, we flushed a small dove-like bird, which could not be immediately relocated.

Respecting the lightning and rain, further search was postponed until the afternoon, when along with Tom Kent, we flushed the bird from the same location. During the course of the next hour, we had good looks from as close as 40 feet, with both binoculars and telescope, identifying it as a Common Ground-Dove.

The bird was only about half the size of nearby Mourning Doves, with a very short tail, short neck, and short legs. The entire head and breast exhibited a scaly appearance. The side of the head had a pink cast, while the crown and nape showed a blue cast. The eye was dark, with a narrow white eye ring. The bill was short (less than half the head width), thin, and pointed. It was two-toned, with a black distal portion and a reddish pink basal half. The bird was generally gray-brown with variously shaped black areas on the folded wing. A rufous wash was seen once at the bend of the wing. The tail was very short, with black on the end and around the sides. The black on the end had an unusual scalloped pattern. The breast was pink and scaly, and the belly was pinkish. The legs were short and a grayish-pink color (Figure 1).



*Figure 1. Common Ground-Dove at Cedar Rapids, 25 October 1991. Photograph by James O. Durbin.*

During flight, a considerable amount of rufous was seen in the wing. It flew fast and low, and dropped back to the ground quickly. The dove sat on the ground or low in small trees. It acted nervous, and would not allow a close approach. It disappeared several times, and was rediscovered some distance away.

During the identification process, other small doves of comparable size were ruled out. The Ruddy Ground-Dove does not have scaling anywhere on its body. The Inca Dove is scaled, but has a longer tail, an entirely black bill, a light belly with black stripes, and lacks the black areas on the wing.

Although not always easy to find, the dove did remain in the same area for about two weeks, allowing a large number of birders to view this first state record. The last sighting was on 2 November during an early season blizzard.

A Common Ground-Dove was recorded at Waconda Country Club in Des Moines on 10 June 1922 (C. H. Pangburn, *The Ground Dove in central Iowa, Auk* 39:566, 1922). The author, who claimed to be familiar with this species, speculated that it might be an escaped cage bird. Because of this and lack of description, the bird was not accepted to the state list.

In recent years, a pattern of vagrancy for this species has become apparent (Figure 2). The monthly distribution of sightings is as follows: March (1), May (2), June (1), July (1), August (3), September (4), October (14), November (10), and December (7).



Figure 2. Breeding range (dark area) and recent vagrant records of Common Ground-Dove by state. The numbers indicate the number of records for each state.

The Cedar Rapids bird, officially Iowa's first, fits the vagrancy pattern of this species well for both date and location. It is interesting that another bird of this species showed up at Whitefish Point in northern Michigan on 21 October 1991 (*American Birds* 46:93), just two days after the Iowa bird was first sighted.

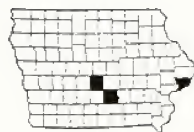
6 Longview Knoll NE, Iowa City, IA 52240



# ICELAND GULLS IN IOWA

THOMAS H. KENT

A first-winter/first-summer Iceland Gull at Red Rock Reservoir from 13 to 16 March 1991 provided Iowa's first accepted record of this species. Previous reports of this species had occurred over the years, but the sightings were brief or not recorded in sufficient detail to be sure of the identification, or may have been in Illinois. Here I report on the spring 1991 record and four more records from the winter of 1991-1992.



On 13 March 1991, Tim Schantz found a white-winged gull below the dam at Red Rock Reservoir in Marion County. The bird was intermediate in size between Ring-billed and Herring gulls, but closer to the latter. On the standing bird, he noted gleaming white primaries that protruded about one inch beyond the tail. In flight, the flight feathers were all white from above and below. The rest of the bird was a mottled or indistinctly flecked off white or very light gray-brown. A mottled tail band was noted. The bill was mostly dark with a light base, the eye dark, and the legs pink. Nine other observers documented this bird over the next three days, and I took photos (Figure 1a and 1b).

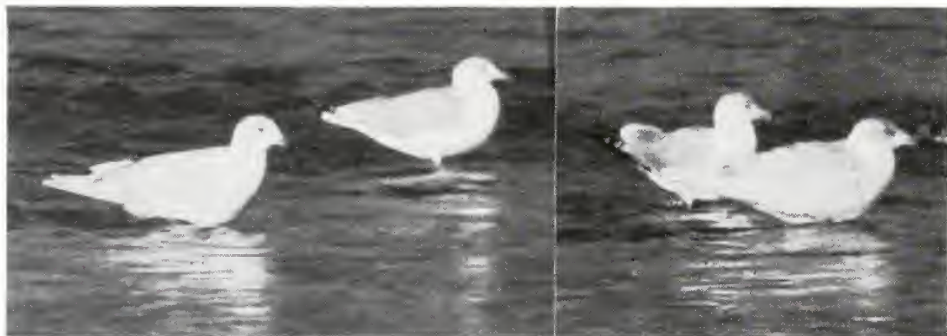


Figure 1a, 1b. Iceland Gull at Red Rock Reservoir, 14 March 1991. Note the more rounded head shape in 1a.

The following details are added from a composite of the other observers. The bill was shorter and thinner than that of Herring Gulls with a smoothly curved distal culmen and minimal gonyl prominence. There was more light color in the lower mandible than the upper, and the demarcation with the black distal part of the bill was indistinct. Some described the head as rounded, others thought it was not. There was a smudge around the eye and some streaking on top of the head. The upper back and upper breast, neck, and parts of the head lacked mottling and appeared white. One observer noted some pale brown on the outer side of the shaft of the distal four or five primaries. The mottled tail band was just slightly darker than the rest of the bird and occupied the distal half of the tail except for a paler, thin terminal band.

Several of the documentors were uncertain of the identification because of the white-headed appearance (suggesting Herring Gull), tail band (more typical of Thayer's Gull), and head shape (better for Herring or Thayer's). The possibilities of leucistic Herring Gull or a hybrid were suggested. The documentations and

photographs were reviewed by Kevin J. Zimmer, the author of a recent article on Iceland Gull with many excellent photographs (Zimmer 1991), who provided explanations for some of the troublesome features. He noted that head shape depended on posture (Figure 1a vs. 1b), and in some photos the shape was within the range of Iceland Gull. He also pointed out, "The individual variation in incredible, and I've seen many an unquestioned Iceland Gull (presumably males) that were as flat-crowned and large-billed as adjacent Herrings, while others look more like doves." Zimmer suggested that the white appearance of the upper body and neck were due to molting of these feathers to first-summer plumage. The tail band was not a problem at all, because Zimmer's article illustrates that many Iceland Gulls have a light tail band. According to Zimmer, "Points against Thayer's Gull include overall paleness, whiteness of the folded primaries, uniform checkering of the tertials [solid brown in Thayer's], absence of secondary bar, paleness of spread wing tip, and amount of contrast at the base of the bill." A leucistic Herring Gull would be expected to have some features other than the white head and neck to suggest that species. To identify a hybrid, one would have to find features of each parent -- a difficult task. The proposed lumping of Iceland and Thayer's gulls into one species would make the possibility of Iceland-Thayer's hybrid moot.

In the next three paragraphs, I describe three different Iceland Gulls, two in first-winter and one in second-winter plumages. Presumably these were the same birds seen by many observers in Bettendorf and Davenport in January and early February 1992.

On 31 December 1991, I went to Lock and Dam 14 in Scott County in an attempt to add some species to my last-day-of-the-year list. From the lock area, I found a very pale gull flying below the dam. On the flying bird, I noted the following: slightly smaller than Herring Gulls; overall off-white on the wings, body, and tail; light brown, poorly demarcated, subterminal tail band about one-fourth the length of the tail; and all-dark bill. The tail band was similar to that on the Iceland Gull photographed in Scott County on 8 February by Tim Schantz (Figure 2). The underwing was all light, with the flight feathers lighter than the coverts. The upper wing was very uniform and without a hint of a secondary bar. I concluded that it was a first-winter bird because of the uniform coloration without gray on the back or wings and that it was not a Glaucous Gull because of the overall size and all black bill. I was less secure in excluding Thayer's Gull because of the tail band and slight brownish edge to the upper side of the outer two or three primaries that I detected using a telescope. Eventually the bird landed on a pillar and later a Herring Gull landed beside it. Compared to the Herring, the bird was 10% smaller; had a smaller, more rounded head with shorter neck; had a bill three-fourths as long; and had a primary extension of about 1 inch and equal to that of the Herring Gull. On the standing bird, the primaries were light colored and the wing and tail coverts appeared finely vermiculated. Based on the wing tip and faintness of the tail band, I argued against Thayer's Gull. Shortly thereafter, at Lock and Dam 15, I viewed a first-winter Thayer's Gull that was quite different in that it was overall darker, had dark wing tips, and had a much darker and more prominent tail band. I saw the Iceland Gull again on 1 January 1992, still flying below the dam, and it was seen the next day by Jim Fuller, who said that it was easy to pick out because of its "ghostly" appearance. Neither of us saw the leg color well. The eye was dark.



I returned to Lock and Dam 14 on 4 January and found two Iceland Gulls that appeared to be different birds from the one seen on 31 December and 1-2 January. The first was a first-year white-winged gull that I saw around a small area of open water in the backwater, rather than flying below the dam and sitting on pillars as had occurred on the previous days. As I moved up taking photographs, the bird flew away. I did not detect any tail band, but one of my photographs (Figure 3) later showed a faint, broken, narrow, light brown, subterminal tail band. I had noted the overall similarity of size and shape (compared to Herring Gulls) to the bird seen three days before, and also noted pink legs, projecting crossed primaries, and indistinct lightness in the base of the bill. One or more first-winter Iceland Gulls were seen farther south in Scott County from Lock and Dam 15 to Bettendorf/Moline by many observers at least to 9 February.



*Figure 2. Iceland Gull in Scott County, 8 February 1992. Note the definite light brown tail band. Photograph by Tim Schantz.*



*Figure 3. Note the minimal brown edging in the distal tailfeathers of this flying first-winter Iceland Gull at Lock and Dam 14 on 4 January 1992.*

On 4 January, after flushing the first-year Iceland Gull, I moved up to look at the gull flock resting on the ice of the backwater. I was surprised to find two white-winged gulls. The second bird had a uniform light-gray back and scapulars and a bill that was dark at the tip and light at the base. In flight, the light gray of the back and scapulars contrasted with the off-white of the upper wing surface. I also noticed a light, smudgy, gray-brown, subterminal tail band that occupied about one-fourth of the tail. Otherwise, this second-year Iceland Gull was similar in size, shape, and proportions to the first-winter bird. I did not see this bird again, but others reported a second-year bird downstream, and Tanya Bray (personal communication) saw a second-year bird on 3 February at Bettendorf/Moline.

On 29 February 1992, Bob and John Cecil and I were driving by the marina at Saylorville Reservoir when Bob saw a white-winged gull on the shoreline. We had heard of a Glaucous Gull being seen earlier in the day, but this bird was not much larger than the Ring-billed Gulls it was with and the bill appeared to be of uniform thickness and all dark. It was slightly longer and distinctly bulkier bodied than the Ring-billed Gulls. Overall it was very light brown with white primaries extending beyond the tail. Bob noted faint scaling on the wings and barring on the tail coverts. We left briefly to get Bob Myers and Maridel Jackson. Cecil and Myers thought the legs had a yellowish cast, but I judged them to be pinkish. I climbed down the bank to photograph the bird (Figure 4) and it eventually flew, revealing all light wing surfaces above and below. Cecil noted that the wings were broader than those of Ring-billed Gulls. I did not hear of any further reports of this bird.

How could I see five and photograph four Iceland Gulls in Iowa in less than one year's time? Did this same phenomenon occur in nearby states? Iceland Gulls

were reported in small numbers along all of the Great Lakes in the winter of 1991-92 (*American Birds* Regional Reports).

Having minimal experience with Iceland Gull prior to these sightings, I was under the impression from reading that identification might be difficult. The recent article by Zimmer was very timely and helpful with some difficult field marks. Zimmer emphasizes the extremely variable tail band in first- and second-year birds. The illustrations are helpful in translating concepts, such as rounded head and long primary extension, into real situations; however, these marks are still not easy to interpret. When comparing my photographs of the March 1991 bird at Red Rock Reservoir with Zimmer's photos, I was unsure whether the head



Figure 4. First-winter Iceland Gull at Saylorville Reservoir on 29 February 1992.

shape fit or not, but Zimmer, with his experience, thought they did. In looking at the isolated Iceland Gull on the pillar at Lock and Dam 14, I could not decide about head and bill shape until a Herring Gull landed next to the bird in question; only then did these field marks become obvious by comparison. With each succeeding sighting, the identification became easier and more obvious. I was also impressed that these birds were cooperative and seen by many observers; whereas, past reports of this species were fleeting and not described in detail.

Both Thayer's and Iceland gulls nest in the eastern nearctic region, and undoubtedly there is some interbreeding. Most Thayer's Gull migrate to the West Coast, but some, especially first-year birds, migrate/winter across the entire United States. Most Iceland Gulls migrate to Europe or the East Coast of North America, but a few of any age occur on the Great Lakes each year, and there are rare scattered individual records farther west.

These observations of the Iceland Gull may soon be moot. It is rumored that Iceland and Thayer's gulls are about to be deemed one species. The Kumlien's subspecies of Iceland Gull is very similar to adult Thayer's Gull, presenting a significant identification problem, particularly in Eastern United States. In Iowa, first-year birds may be more likely and are more easily separated.

What will these "new" birds be called. We may have to speak of "Thayer's-type first-winter Iceland Gulls" or just call them all Iceland Gulls and lose all the valuable information we are getting from the careful documentations by many Iowa observers. I hope we will still consider each gull individually, judging its age and describing each of its feathers and soft parts. Let the species fall where they may!

#### LITERATURE CITED

Zimmer, K.J. 1991. Plumage variation in "Kumlien's" Iceland Gull. *Birding* 23:254-269.

211 Richards St., Iowa City, IA 52246



# LATE FALL AND WINTER BIRDING ALONG THE MISSISSIPPI RIVER IN EAST-CENTRAL IOWA

PETER C. PETERSEN

The Mississippi River in the Quad-City area has been a great attraction for gulls in recent years during the winter months. In January and February 1992, nine gull species were recorded just in the Quad-Cities. This article describes some of the best locations to check from November to March



for gulls as well as waterfowl and other winter birds. The route starts at Lock 17 and proceeds north to Lock 12 (Figure 1). All along the route, the Mississippi River is a good reference point to help keep you oriented. However, keep in mind that the river does not always flow south. Between Muscatine and Clinton it flows west or southwest, making it easy to get disoriented.

From the Illinois side of the Mississippi, Lock 17 (1) is reached by going north from New Boston on the Great River Road and turning west at the Lock 17 sign about one mile north of New Boston. Lock 17 is not a good concentration point for gulls or diving ducks, but dabbling ducks often linger into late December. They feed in the corn fields and are usually seen late in the day. Bald Eagles are present in good numbers at the lock and west end of Route 17 in New Boston.

On the Iowa side of the Mississippi River, Mark Twain National Wildlife Refuge lies adjacent to Lock 17. Access is limited during the waterfowl season in November and December. For access, check with the refuge personnel at the refuge office, R. R. #1, Box 75, Wapello, IA 52653, (phone 319-523-6982).

Lock 16 (2) is reached by going east from IL 92 just on the Illinois side of the Mississippi River bridge at Muscatine. The lock can also be viewed in Iowa from the southern end of Park Street on the east side of Muscatine. Take Route 92 across the river into Muscatine and turn right at the intersection with Routes 22 and 61. In a few blocks this road angles to the left and becomes Park Street. Lock 16 is not a gathering spot for gulls, but often has large numbers of Bald Eagles. A good location for woodland and coniferous species in Muscatine is Greenwood Cemetery (3), 1814 Lucas Street. Stay on Route 61 to where it intersects the Muscatine bypass. Follow the bypass to the west and south. Shortly after it crosses Route 22 it intersects Lucas Street. Proceed into town on Lucas; the cemetery is on the right in about 1.5 miles. Pine Grosbeaks have been found here, and Winter Wrens are often found in the cemetery's ravines.

From Muscatine, proceed toward Davenport on Route 22 which leaves Park at Washington Street. About eight miles east of Muscatine turn left on the county road marked for Wildcat Den State Park (4). At the park, the trail along Pine Creek from the ranger's house to the creek picnic grounds, about one mile long, is usually the most productive. Birds expected in winter include Winter and Carolina wrens, Wild Turkey, and Pileated Woodpecker.

Return to Route 22 and continue toward Davenport. Watch for Bald Eagles along the river to the Davenport city limit at Utah Avenue. Turn right (south) on Utah to South Concord Street and then proceed east along the river and Credit Island Harbor (5), watching for ducks, gulls, and Bald Eagles. To reach Fairmont Cemetery (6), an area similar to Greenwood Cemetery in Muscatine, turn left on Route 61 and proceed to Rockingham Road (Route 22). Turn right (east) and drive toward the city about four blocks to the cemetery. The



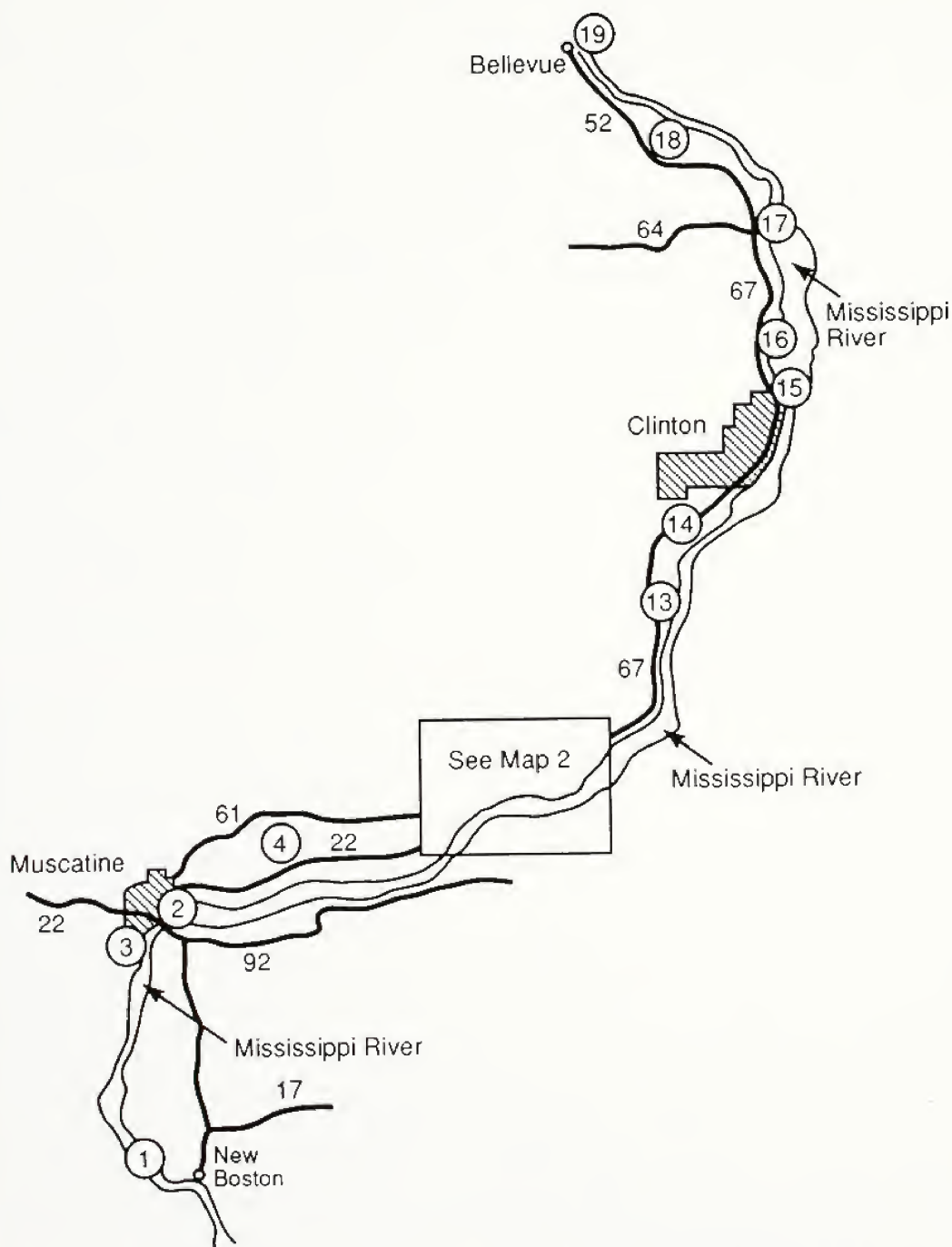


Figure 1. Birding areas along the Mississippi River between Lock and Dams 12 and 17.

section of large hemlocks along Rockingham Road is best for winter finches while the area on the bluff is good for open woodland species.

Return to Route 61 and proceed into Davenport to the turn off on the right to Credit Island (7), a large city park on an island in the river. The downstream end of the park contains an abandoned road and many trails. The Quad-City Audubon Society maintains a feeder along the east edge of this area. The feeder is visible from the park road. Woodland species which can be seen include Red-shouldered Hawk, Pileated Woodpecker, and Carolina Wren. Bald Eagles prefer the river edge of the island. The harbor side can be great for gulls just as the ice forms in late November and in March as it melts. A California Gull spent several days here in late November 1989.

Continue to follow Route 61 into Davenport to where it turns north onto Brady Street but follow Route 67 (which 61 intersects) to the east into downtown Davenport. Lock 15 (8) can be viewed from the parking lot behind the Rusty Pelican Restaurant off Route 67 on Perry Street (one block beyond Brady). This lock is a very good spot for gulls and eagles. The gulls rest just above Lock 15 while not feeding and can be seen best from the Rock Island Arsenal on an island in the river. To reach the island, continue east on Second Street, one block north of Route 67, cross the river on the low iron bridge just above Lock 15, and turn left just as you get on the island. Take the second lane left, about two blocks from the guard station and look over this harbor. While you are near Lock 15 and the Route 67 bridge (Centennial), keep a lookout for a Peregrine Falcon. One overwintered here in 1991-92 and a pair nested under the bridge in 1992.

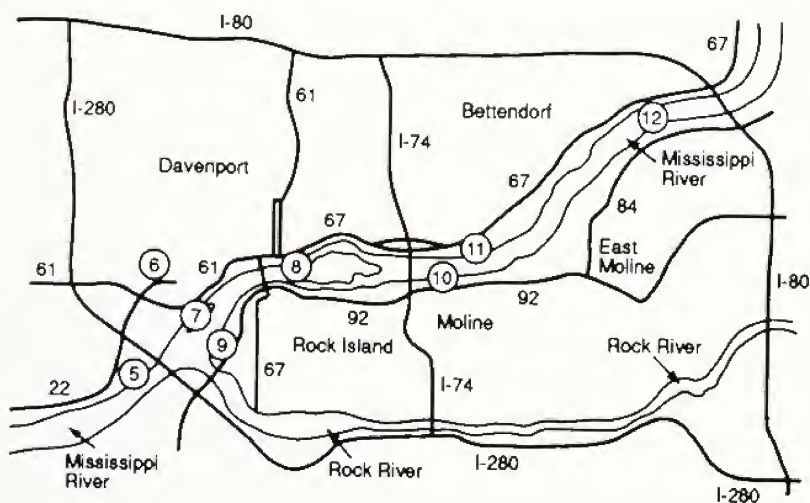


Figure 2. Birding areas along the Mississippi River in the Quad Cities area.

At times Lake Potter at Sunset Park (9) in Rock Island can be very good for gulls. Leave the Arsenal by retracing your route back toward the guard station but then passing south of the Clock Tower Building on the road marked "Rock Island" which leads to Route 92. Take Route 92 west past downtown Rock Island to either the 18th Avenue or 31st Avenue exit and proceeding to the right (west);

both lead to Potter Lake. If there is no snow, the lane along the lake will be open, otherwise you may have to approach the lake from both the 18th and 31st avenues to see both ends of the lake. It is another resting spot for gulls.

The top location for gulls in the area is the Ben Butterworth Memorial Parkway (10) in Moline. It starts near the Interstate 74 bridge and is Third Avenue, Moline at the bridge. To reach the parkway from Lake Potter, return to Route 92 and drive east past Interstate 74 to 23rd Street, turn left (north) to the end of 23rd Street and then turn right onto the parkway. Continue east a few blocks looking for the Jubilee Riverboat Restaurant. You can park in any of the lots which extend from there to the eastern border of Moline where the road leaves the river shore. The area just west of 34th Street is often very good. Gulls often roost on an old wall from the 1899 navigation project near the center of the river. The biggest concentration occurs in late afternoon. You always have many Herring and Ring-billed gulls for comparison. Thayer's can usually be located if the birds are close enough for a positive identification. Many Mallards and a few American Black Ducks crowd the area just upstream from the Jubilee and are often joined by less common overwintering species such as Wood Duck, Northern Pintail, and divers.

The only place to view this area from the Iowa side lies between 35th and 42nd streets in Bettendorf (11). To reach this viewing place, return to Interstate 74, cross the river to Bettendorf, exit onto Highway 67, and then turn right onto 35th Street and continue to Elm Street which parallels the river. Return to Route 67 which will take you to Lock 14 (12) just past Pleasant Valley on a road marked "Lock 14". A public access and boat ramp lies downstream from the lock on the Iowa side. On the Illinois side, from Butterworth Parkway take First Street, East Moline, a few blocks south to Route 92, and turn left (east). Continue to the junction with Illinois Route 84 and turn left and follow the road to Lock 14. You can turn off on a gravel road that goes toward the lock on a raised roadway. In winter the sun is well to the south and on clear days the best viewing is from Illinois.

Proceeding up river, the river bends sharply just above the Interstate 80 bridge and will again be flowing south, giving you a better sense of direction. If you stay in Iowa you will perhaps see a few gulls, ducks, and eagles along the river. The area just east of the Interstate 80 bridge viewed from Canal Shore Drive is good for ducks. Take Route 67 north through Princeton and look for the turnoff to Princeton Marsh (13) about one mile past Princeton on the right, just past a curve. The first access road, just after you cross the railroad tracks, is probably the best in winter. If it is cold and snow is present, the marsh will probably not be productive. If it is early or late in the winter season, late or early ducks may be present. You can walk the dike from the parking lot if you wish.

Return to Route 67 and head north to Camanche (14). The highway bypasses most of the town so turn right into town at the first opportunity, Washington Boulevard, to Third Street and then turn right. Follow Third Street until you approach the river and drop down to Second and then to First streets. Ducks and eagles are frequently seen along the riverfront, especially along Swan Slough near 13th Avenue and Second Street. Return to Washington Boulevard and turn right to reconnect with Route 67 north of town. Take 67 through Clinton to Stockwell Lane on the north edge of town. Turn right to Eagle Point Park (15), which provides an overview of Lock 13 from the bluff top. The conifers are often good for crossbills and have produced a Townsend's Solitaire. If you cross Route 67 and go west on Stockwell Lane about a mile, you will see a flooded quarry on the left. Puddle ducks and less common wintering waterfowl species are sometimes found here.



Retrace your path to Route 67 and proceed north about three miles to Bulger's Hollow Road (16) on the right. This permits access to the Mississippi River and can be good early and late in the winter if the river is not completely ice covered. It is a good spot for loons and scoters in late November.

Follow Route 67 and then Route 52 to Sabula (17). Sabula lies on an island in the river, and waterbirds and eagles can be seen on all sides. A stop on Driscoll's Island half way across the backwater from the Iowa shore to the town is productive if any open water can be seen. Occasionally Snow Buntings feed here. Turn right on the first street you encounter in Sabula and follow it until you can cross under the railroad tracks. Keep right around a marina to South Sabula Lakes Park, a county area. Many gulls congregate on the river and backwater here.

Green Island Wildlife Management Area (18) is reached by turning right off Routes 67 and 52 about eight miles north of Sabula at the Flyway Cafe and proceeding about two miles to the area headquarters. This area is good in November and March, but probably not during most of the winter. The Fish Lake Road provides the best access. You can continue on the gravel to the town of Green Island and rejoin Routes 67 and 52. You can contact the state personnel by phoning 319-682-7392.

Bellevue and Lock 12 (19) are primarily noteworthy for eagle concentrations. Bellevue State Park is reached by turning left off 67 and 52 just before entering the town from the south. It is upland forest with Wild Turkeys and has a good view of the city and lock.

During the cold weather period, the ice conditions are critical for waterfowl, Bald Eagles, and especially gulls. Prior to ice formation the feeding area is so great that concentrations are rare. During periods of rapid ice formation, a good concentration of birds can be found at the edge of extensive ice; the reverse is true as the ice edge moves northward in February or March. During periods of sub-zero weather, gulls may be completely displaced southward out of this area, but they return rapidly with the advent of warmer temperatures. During most of January and February in the average winter most open water is found below the dams and near warm-water release such as heavy industry and power stations.

In the immediate Quad-City area gulls have more open water available for foraging than most of the other locations mentioned in this article. It is not unusual to find gulls completely absent from Locks 12 and 17 during the winter.

The state line is the navigation channel of the Mississippi River. This is marked by buoys in the warm weather periods, green to the Iowa side and red to the Illinois side. They are sometimes removed in winter for maintenance. The Iowa records committee considers the center line of the river to be the border for state list purposes. When viewing from shore it always looks like birds just past the center are closer to the side where the observer is standing. The old sea wall at Butterworth Parkway area is almost exactly in the center of the river but to the Illinois side of the navigation channel.

A telescope is necessary for most effective viewing along the Mississippi. In many cases a window mount is helpful, but a tripod is always better for multiple observations. You can, of course, move up and down the shore at most locations to improve your light angle. Where the river flows north to south, the viewing is best from Illinois in the morning and Iowa in the afternoon.

*235 McClellan Blvd., Davenport, IA 52803*

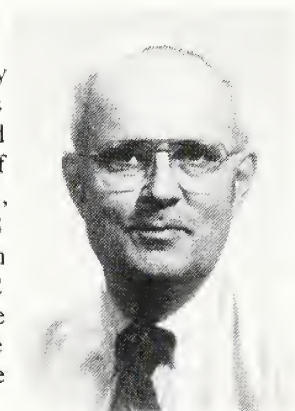
# FIELD REPORTS-SUMMER 1992

JAMES J. DINSMORE

## WEATHER

This summer's weather can be divided into distinctly different halves. June was dry with drought-like conditions over much of the state by the end of the month. May and June 1992 were the second driest on record. Only parts of northern Iowa had near normal precipitation. Statewide, rainfall averaged 1.98 inches, well below the normal 4.48 inches. In contrast, July was wet with heavy precipitation over most of Iowa. With a July statewide average of 8.2 inches of rain (compared to a normal 3.95 inches), it was the second wettest July on record. Parts of Iowa that were parched and brown in early July were lush and green by the end of the month.

Temperature-wise, it was one of the coolest summers on record. There were no days of 100 degree weather anywhere in Iowa and few days that even reached the 90s. Temperature dipped into the 50s or low 60s most nights while daytime highs were generally in the 70s or low 80s. It dipped into the mid 40s on 21 June with a very cool 37 degrees at Fayette. June's daily average temperature of 68.6 was below the normal of 70.1 degrees. The statewide average temperature of 68.8 degrees (the normal is 74.3) made it the second coolest July on record, exceeded only in 1891.



## HABITAT CONDITIONS

The drought conditions prevalent in late June led to the usual calls for haying or grazing on the 2.1 million acres of Iowa enrolled in the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) as well as land in annual set-aside programs. Fortunately, with the return of rain those appeals subsided. To this observer's eyes, CRP is providing habitat that is important to many grassland species. Sedge Wrens, Dickcissels, and Grasshopper Sparrows are often found in such areas while Upland Sandpipers and Northern Harriers may use such habitat. The benefits of this 10-year set-aside program are now becoming apparent to birders.

Otherwise, the weather conditions probably allowed for good nesting success for many species. The lack of rain early in the summer should have led to low nest losses for ground nesting birds. Fortunately for most aquatic species, water conditions in northern Iowa were better than elsewhere in the state so the drought-like conditions were less apparent there than elsewhere. Several observers commented on the abundance of ducks and coots in the Great Lakes region. It was not all good news though. According to Mosman, the cool weather had devastating effects on Purple Martin young.

As far as migrants are concerned, the most obvious effect was the few reports of southbound shorebirds that I received. The ponds that dried up in June were rapidly covered with plants along their shorelines. When they were reflooded in July, that vegetation covered what had formerly been mudflats leaving little shorebird habitat.



## UNUSUAL SPECIES

As has been the pattern in recent years, this was a pretty dull summer. The only Accidental species reported were Mississippi Kite and Laughing Gull. Casual species included White-faced Ibis, Bewick's Wren, and Eurasian Tree Sparrow. Other good finds were Western Grebe, King Rail, Barn Owl, Prairie Warbler, Black-and-white Warbler, Clay-colored Sparrow, and Henslow's Sparrow.

The highlight of the nesting season was the return of Sandhill Cranes after almost a century and Peregrine Falcons after about 25 years. Other good finds of nesting birds included Blue-gray Gnatcatcher, American Wigeon, Canvasback, and Bufflehead in northwestern Iowa, Western Grebe in north-central Iowa, Barn Owl in south-central Iowa, and King Rail in eastern Iowa.

## SPECIES DATA

\* = documented, [] = record date, m.ob. = many observers

**Common Loon:** Singles were reported at Rice L., Worth Co. on 11 Jun (basic plumage, MPr), Little Wall L. on 26 Jun (basic plumage, SJD, HZ), Rush L., Osceola Co. on 28 Jun (alternate plumage, SJD), and Silver L., Worth Co. on 28 Jun (alternate plumage, JLW, RGo).

**Pied-billed Grebe:** Nests or broods were found in Clay, Dickinson, Emmet, Johnson, Kossuth, Osceola, Palo Alto, Winnebago, Winneshiek, Worth, and Wright counties.

**Eared Grebe:** One at Elm L., Wright Co. on 27 Jun (SJD) was the only report.

**Western Grebe:** There were an unprecedented number of reports, including a pair with 2 young at Silver L., Worth Co. on 28 Jun, 6 Jul (JLW, RGo), the second documented nesting site for Iowa. Other reports included 1 at Fort Dodge on 11, 15 Jun (DK, RIC), 1 or 2 at Rice L., Worth Co. on 7, 11 Jun (DC, MPr), 2 courting at Elm L., on 27 Jun (SJD), 1 at the IPL Ponds from 28 Jun-5 Jul (BKP, LJP, SJD), and 3 at West Swan L., Emmet Co. on 28 Jun (SJD).

**American White Pelican:** Pelicans were everywhere. I had reports from Buena Vista, Calhoun, Clay, Clinton, Des Moines, Emmet, Greene, Guthrie, Kossuth, Louisa, Marion, Polk, Pottawattamie, Story, Warren, Worth, and Wright counties. Flocks of 200 at Iowa L., Kossuth Co. on 27 Jun (SJD) and 700 at Runnells W.A. on 28 Jun (JSi) were much earlier than migrants normally arrive in Iowa.

**Double-crested Cormorant:** The colony at Union Slough N.W.R. had 13 nests on 9 Jun but half were lost in a storm and the others were abandoned (MCK). There were the usual scattered reports of 1 or 2 birds, several groups of 25-30 along the Mississippi R. (PCP, DRP), and 35 at Coralville Res. on 11 Jul (THK).

**American Bittern:** 1 or 2 were seen at Spring Run W.A. (DCH), McBreen M., Dickinson Co. (Julie Schreiber fide JJD), a private pond in NW Palo Alto Co. (Kristin VanRees fide JJD), and Grover L., Dickinson Co. (LAS), about typical of recent years.

**Least Bittern:** 1 or 2 were found from 27 Jun-26 Jul at Green Island W.A., Jackson Co., Zirbel Slough, Cerro Gordo Co., Trumbull L., Clay Co., Goose L., Greene Co., and Elm L., somewhat more than most recent years.

**Great Blue Heron:** Nesting colonies were active at West Swan L. (23 nests, SJD), Otter Creek M. (MS), and below Saylorville Dam (194 nests counted from last year, BE). A count of 130 at Coralville Res. on 4 Jun (THK) was high while 75 flying over Effigy Mounds N.M. on 20 Jun (DC) suggests birds from a nearby colony.

**Great Egret:** Saylorville and West Swan L. had no nesting egrets this year. The 31 flying over Effigy Mounds N.M. on 20 Jun (DC) suggests nesting nearby while 25 at Mark Twain N.W.R. on 18 Jul (THK) was the only post-breeding concentration reported.

**Little Blue Heron:** An immature at Mark Twain N.W.R. on 18 Jul (THK) was the only report.

**Cattle Egret:** 2 near Nevada on 29 Jul (Ed Havens fide JJD) was the only report.

**Black-crowned Night-Heron:** Nest building was noted on 28 Jun at Grover L., Dickinson Co. and Rush L., Osceola Co. (SJD) while nesting was suspected at the Russ W.A., Winnebago Co. (SJD). 1-4 birds were seen at several other sites.

**Yellow-crowned Night-Heron:** 2 adults at Otter Creek M. in Jul (MS) was the only report.

**White-faced Ibis:** 1 at Twelve-mile W.P.A. (Waterfowl Production Area), Emmet Co. on 28 Jun (SJD, details) is the first summer report since 1986.



- Snow Goose:** 6 summered at the IPL Ponds (BKP, LJP). Other reports were 2 at Riverton A. on 1 Jun (THK), 1 at Saylorville Res. on 19 Jun (BE), and 1 at Kiowa M., Sac Co. on 29 Jun (SJD).
- Green-winged Teal:** Up to 5 were found at several sites in the Great Lakes region in June. Other reports were singles at Union Slough N.W.R. on 2 Jun (MCK), Coralville Res. on 3 Jun (THK), and near St. Benedict, Kossuth Co. on 22 Jun (MCK).
- Mallard:** Groups of 228 at Twelve-mile W.P.A., and 121 at West Swan L. (both 28 Jun, SJD) consisted mostly of males in eclipse plumage.
- Northern Pintail:** Despite the good water conditions, I had no reports of this species.
- Northern Shoveler:** A pair with 3 young was at Twelve-mile W.P.A. on 28 Jun (SJD). Other reports were 1 at Coralville Res. on 3 Jun (THK) and a pair at Spring Run W.A. on 11 Jun (JJD).
- Gadwall:** There were far more reports than usual. As many as 3 pairs were seen at McBreen M. and Spring Run in Dickinson Co. (SJD, JJD), Cunningham Slough and Four-mile W.P.A. in Emmet Co. (SJD, JJD), and Union Slough N.W.R. (MCK); probably all were nesting nearby. Up to 4 at the I.P.L. Ponds (THK, BKP, LJP), and single males at Saylorville Res. (SJD) and at a farm pond in Winneshiek Co. (DC) probably were nonbreeders.
- American Wigeon:** A brood of 8 at Russ W.A., Winnebago Co. on 27 Jun (SJD) and another of 8 w. of Graettinger, Palo Alto Co. on 25 Jun, 14 Jul (Steve Cordt, details, fide JJD) add to the few recent breeding records for Iowa. Other reports were 2 males at Union Sl. N.W.R. on 2 Jun (MCK), a pair at Four-mile W.P.A. on 12 Jun (JJD), and 1 or 2 at Coralville Res. on 5, 7 Jun (DRP, THK).
- Canvasback:** A brood of 11 at Trumbull L., Clay Co. on 1 Jul (Tom Neal fide JJD) is the first breeding record in 4 years. One was in Cerro Gordo Co. on 1 Jun (RGo).
- Redhead:** Harr thought they were abundant in the Great Lakes region (DCH). There were 17 at Grover L. on 28 Jun (SJD) and 5 pairs at Union Slough N.W.R. on 9 Jun (MCK).
- Ring-necked Duck:** 1-3 were at the IPL Ponds throughout the period (BKP, LJP). Other reports were a pair at Union Slough N.W.R. on 9 Jun (MCK), a male at Burns Prairie, Palo Alto Co. on 11 Jun (JJD), and 2 at Grover L. on 21 Jul (LAS).
- Lesser Scaup:** 1-3 were at the IPL Ponds through 11 Jul (THK, BKP, LJP, SJD). The only other reports were single males at Sweet M. on 8 Jun (THK, JLF) and Bays Branch W.A., Guthrie Co. on 7 Jul (SJD, JJD).
- Bufflehead:** A brood near Dan Green Slough in June (Todd Walrod fide JJD, details) is only the second nesting record for Iowa.
- Hooded Merganser:** The only broods reported were at Union Slough N.W.R. and near Burt, Kossuth Co. (MCK). 1-3 females were found in Clay, Dickinson (3 sites), Jackson, Johnson, Palo Alto, and Wright counties.
- Common Merganser:** Single males were at Coralville Res. on 5, 7 Jun (DRP, THK) and IPL Ponds on 7 Jul (SJD, JJD), and a female was near L. Manawa on 17, 25 Jul (BKP, LJP). This species is seldom found in Iowa in summer.
- Ruddy Duck:** This species was called abundant in the Great Lakes region (DCH). A nest was found in NW Palo Alto Co. (Julie Schreiber fide JJD). High counts were 53 at Grover L. on 28 Jun (SJD) and 18 at Rice L., Worth Co. on 11 Jun (MPt). All reports were from N Iowa except 1 at Coralville Res. on 6 Jun (THK).
- Turkey Vulture:** A young bird close to fledging was found in S Clay Co. in late Jul (Clint Fraley fide LAS), a part of state where the species is not common. Up to 9 in the Algona area (MCK) and up to 4 near Ventura, Cerro Gordo Co. (RGo) were also in regions where the species is not common.
- Osprey:** Besides 1 n. of Mason City from 8-22 Jun (David Dunn fide CN), singles were seen in Guthrie, Madison, Marion, Polk, and Story (2 sites) from 28 Jun to the end of the period, more than most summers.
- Mississippi Kite:** The pair remained at Clive (\*JLF, RIC) through June while 1 was seen n. of Iowa City on 13 Jun (\*RBe).
- Bald Eagle:** An immature near Algona in early July (MCK) was out of the species' usual summer range. Eleven nests produced at least 20 young, the highest total in this century (Bruce Ehresman fide JJD).
- Northern Harrier:** Singles near Anderson Prairie, Emmet Co. (JJD), s. of Algona (MCK), and at Rice L., Worth Co. (DC) all in early June probably represent breeding birds. Others seen in late June and July, all singles, in Boone, Cerro Gordo, and Winnebago counties could be early migrants.
- Cooper's Hawk:** A brood of 2 was at Brown's Woods, Polk Co. on 2 Jun (JSi) while single immatures were seen in Des Moines on 19 Jun (BE) and at Call S.P., Kossuth Co. on 25, 26

- Jul (MCK). Single adults were in SW Jasper Co. on 24 Jun (SJD) and at Runnells W.A. on 11 Jul (JSi).
- Red-shouldered Hawk:** As expected, red-shoulders were present at Effigy Mounds N.M. throughout the period (DC) but 1 at Kettleston Hogsback W.A., Dickinson Co. on 6 Jul (fide DCH) was far out of range.
- Broad-winged Hawk:** An immature in Waterworks P., Des Moines on 21 Jul (RIC) was the only indication of nesting. 1 or 2 were seen at Ledges S.P., Waubonsie S.P., Shimek F., Effigy Mounds N.M., and L. Macbride.
- Swainson's Hawk:** A nest was found near Mason City (RGo, CF, JLW) while a bird was near Algona for the 4th year in a row (MCK).
- Peregrine Falcon:** Peregrines nested in Iowa for the first time in about 25 years. Nests at Davenport and Des Moines both had eggs but both failed. The reintroduction program moved to Muscatine where 8 young were hatched in late July. An adult at the IPL Ponds on 4 Jul (BKP, LJP) probably was from the Omaha reintroduction program.
- King Rail:** A female with 2 young at Green Island W.A. on 19 Jul (JiD, photo) followed an earlier sighting of 1 there on 6 Jul (\*JLF). One was also heard at L. Wapello on 19 Jul (CAA, details). These are the first summer reports of this elusive species in 4 years.
- Virginia Rail:** Nesting was noted in Clay, Dickinson, Emmet, Kossuth, and Palo Alto counties (Julie Schreiber fide JJD) and at Silver L., Worth Co. (JLW, RGo).
- Sora:** 4 were at Myre Slough, Winnebago Co. on 27 Jun (SJD).
- Common Moorhen:** Broods seen at Green Island W.A. (THK) and Otter Creek M. (MS). 1-4 were at Silver L., Worth Co. (JLW, RGo), Big Wall L. (SJD), Swan L., Johnson Co. (DLD, DRP), and Coralville Res. (THK).
- American Coot:** Broods were seen at Swan L., Johnson Co. (THK) and McIntosh W.A., Cerro Gordo Co. (JLW). With a count of 230 at Grover L. (SJD), they were called common in NW Iowa (SJD) while there were few at Union Slough N.W.R. (MCK) and none at Cardinal M., Winneshiek Co. (DC).
- Sandhill Crane:** 2 broods were found at Otter Creek W. A. on 6 and 7 Jun (DPo, m.ob.), the first report on nesting in Iowa since 1894. A total of 10 birds (2 pairs, 3 young, and 3 others) were present, leading to speculation that the odd birds were young from a previous year.
- Black-bellied Plover:** 1 at Swan W.A. on 1, 5 Jun [3rd latest](THK, AMJ) and 2 at Coralville Res. on 3 Jun (THK) is more than any other recent year.
- Lesser Golden-Plover:** 1 at Spring Run W.A., Dickinson Co. on 11 Jun (JJD) and 2 different birds the next day (JJD) were the last spring birds. Two in basic plumage near Cunningham Sl., Emmet Co. on 28 Jun (SJD) were the first southbound (?) birds. Groups of 12+ in Lyon Co. and 17 in O'Brien Co., both on 27 Jul (DCH) were the largest summer groups reported in recent years.
- Semipalmated Plover:** 6 e. of West Bend, Kossuth Co. on 26 Jul (MCK) were the first southbound birds.
- Piping Plover:** 2 pairs nested at the IPL Ponds; 1 nest was flooded and the other was abandoned in mid Jul (BKP, LJP).
- American Avocet:** 8 at Saylorville Res. on 26 Jul (BE) was the only report.
- Greater Yellowlegs:** 1 at Swan W.A. on 7 Jun (AMJ) was the latest spring bird. Singles on 27 Jun at Riverton A. (JSi) and 28 Jun e. of West Bend (MCK) were the first southbound birds.
- Lesser Yellowlegs:** The last spring bird was 1 at Union Slough N.W.R. on 2 Jun (MCK). One at Riverton A. on 27 Jun (JSi) and 5 at both Hendrickson M. (HZ) and e. of West Bend (MCK) the next day were the first southbound birds. A peak of 120 were e. of West Bend on 26 Jul (MCK).
- Solitary Sandpiper:** Singles at Big Wall L. on 27 Jun (SJD) and Twelve-mile W.P.A. on 28 Jun (SJD) were the earliest southbound birds.
- Spotted Sandpiper:** Broods were seen at Saylorville Res on 24 Jun (SJD) and Hendrickson M. on 11 Jul (HZ).
- Upland Sandpiper:** 1-7 were reported in Boone (nest), Cerro Gordo (brood), Cherokee, Des Moines, Fremont, Grundy, Hardin, Ida, Iowa, Jones, Kossuth, Marshall, Plymouth, Polk, Story, Warren, Wayne, and Worth counties, about typical.
- Ruddy Turnstone:** 1 at the IPL Ponds on 6 Jun (BKP, LJP) was the only report.
- Sanderling:** 7 at Runnells A. on 1 Jun (THK, details) was the only report.
- Semipalmated Sandpiper:** The usual late spring reports included 5 at Coralville Res. on 7 Jun (THK), 15 at Swan W.A. on 7 Jun (AMJ), and several in Polk Co. on 8 Jun (BE). The first fall birds were 1 at Saylorville Res. on 8 Jul (SJD) and 12 in Polk Co. on 10 Jul (LPH). The most reported was 100 e. of West Bend on 26 Jul (MCK).



- Western Sandpiper:** 2 in Polk Co. on 10 Jul (LPH, details) and 1 e. of West Bend on 26 Jul (MCK, details) were the only reports.
- Least Sandpiper:** 2 on 8 Jun in Polk Co. (BE)[2nd latest] were the last spring birds. One at the IPL Ponds on 24 Jun [2nd earliest](BKP, LJP) and 1 e. of West Bend on 28 Jun (MCK) were the first fall birds. The most reported were 100 at Mark Twain N.W.R. on 18 Jul (THK) and 120 e. of West Bend on 26 Jul (MCK).
- White-rumped Sandpiper:** The last spring birds were 75 at Coralville Res. on 7 Jun (THK), 25 at Swan W.A. on 7 Jun (AMJ), 2 in Polk Co. on 8 Jun (BE), and 1 at Coralville Res. on 14 Jun(THK). One in W Dickinson Co. on 21 Jul (LAS, details) was unusually early.
- Baird's Sandpiper:** Singles in SW Emmet Co. (SJD, details) and e. of West Bend (\*MCK), both on 28 Jun [record earliest] were the first fall birds while 1 at Red Rock Res. on 8 Jul (AMJ) was also early [3rd earliest].
- Pectoral Sandpiper:** 1 at Nora Springs, Floyd Co. on 10 Jun (JLW) was the last spring bird. About 100 in Polk Co. on 8 Jun (BE) was an unusual number for so late. The first southbound birds were 4 at Riverton A. on 27 Jun (JSi).
- Stilt Sandpiper:** 2 s. of Algona on 2 Jun (MCK) were the last spring birds. One at Saylorville Res. on 8 Jul (SJD) was the first fall bird; 38 e. of West Bend on 26 Jul (MCK) was the most reported.
- Buff-breasted Sandpiper:** 1 at Red Rock Res. on 8 Jul (AMJ, details)[record earliest] was unprecedented. The only other report was 4 at the IPL Ponds on 31 Jul (BJP, LKP).
- Short-billed Dowitcher:** 1 at Jester P., Polk Co. on 8 Jun (BE)[ties record latest] was the last spring bird. One in Polk Co. on 10 Jul (LPH) and 1 at Green Island W.A. on 11 Jul (DRP) were the first fall birds.
- Long-billed Dowitcher:** 1 at the IPL Ponds on 25 Jul [2nd earliest](BKP, LJP) was the only report.
- Common Snipe:** 2 at Green Island W.A. on 6 Jul (JLF) and 1 there on 25 Jul (THK) were the only reports.
- Wilson's Phalarope:** A male that acted territorial was at Coralville Res. on 7, 27 Jun, and 11 Jul (THK). The only other reports were 1 at Swan W.A. on 7 Jun (AMJ) and 1 at Jester P. on 8 Jun (BE).
- Laughing Gull:** A juvenile was at Red Rock Res. from 21-26 Jul (\*THK, \*AMJ, \*JLF, \*PA/RA). One was there last year on about the same dates.
- Franklin's Gull:** 1-6 were found in Cerro Gordo, Clay, Dickinson, Johnson, Kossuth, Polk, Pottawattamie, and Wright counties. As expected, most sightings were in NW Iowa.
- Ring-billed Gull:** There were the usual reports from throughout the state. Other than 100+ near Spring Run W.A. on 11 Jun (JJD), most sightings were of fewer than 10 birds but by late July, numbers had increased such as 75 near Credit Island, Scott Co. on 31 Jul (PCP).
- Caspian Tern:** 1-7 were found in Allamakee, Clay, Des Moines, Ida, Marion, Pocahontas, Polk, Pottawattamie, and Wright counties. The most was 15 at L. Rathbun on 18 Jun (BE).
- Common Tern:** 1 on Big Wall L. on 6 Jun (MPR, AMJ, details) and 2 at Saylorville Res. on 24 Jun (SJD) were the only reports.
- Forster's Tern:** Nesting was noted at Eagle L., Hancock Co. (SJD), Grover L. (SJD), and Ventura M., Cerro Gordo Co. (CN).
- Least Tern:** Although as many as 9 birds were seen, only 1 pair nested. At least 1 chick was present on 7 Jul but none could be found on 9 Jul (BPa, LPa).
- Black Tern:** Nesting was noted at Big Wall L., Eagle L., Hancock Co., Russ W.A., Winnebago Co., Jemmerson Slough, Dickinson Co., Oppedahl Tract, Palo Alto Co., Grover L., (all SJD) and at Silver L., Worth Co. (RGo, JLW, DC), more than has been noted for several years.
- Black-billed Cuckoo:** I had reports of 1-4 birds in Boone, Butler, Cerro Gordo, Clay, Dallas, Dickinson, Hardin, Ida, Kossuth, Polk, Wayne, Winneshiek, and Worth counties. Several observers commented that it is less common than the next species.
- Yellow-billed Cuckoo:** 1-6 were reported from Appanoose, Boone, Butler, Cerro Gordo, Dallas, Ida, Jasper, Kossuth, Lee, Polk, and Van Buren counties.
- Barn Owl:** A male near Boone throughout the summer (Bruce Ehresman fide JJD) and a pair with 7 young near Bedford on 5 Jun (PA, RA) were the only reports.
- Chuck-will's-widow:** 1 at Waubonsie S.P. on 1 Jun (THK) and 2 on 4 Jul in Fremont Co. (AMJ) were the only reports.
- Ruby-throated Hummingbird:** I received reports of 1 or 2 from Allamakee, Boone, Johnson, Kossuth, Linn, Van Buren, and Winneshiek counties. Is this species really that scarce?
- Belted Kingfisher:** A nest with young was found in NW Cass Co. (MAP).
- Red-headed Woodpecker:** Harr thought they were abundant in NW Iowa this summer (DCH).



- Yellow-bellied Sapsucker:** Sapsuckers were common in Mississippi riverbottoms in Allamakee Co. (Melinda Knutson fide JJD). Other reports were a family group at Effigy Mounds N.M. in July (DC) and the report of them breeding near Algona (Rod Schmidt fide MCK).
- Pileated Woodpecker:** 1 at Ledges S.P. on 27 Jun thrilled a group from the A.O.U. meeting as well as being the first record there in recent memory (HZ). Further up the Des Moines R., a female carrying food on 11 Jun (MCK) probably was nesting.
- Olive-sided Flycatcher:** There were several late spring migrants including singles in Polk Co. (LPH) and Blood Run, Lyon Co. (DCH) on 7 Jun and Moorhead P., Ida Co. on 10 Jun (PE).
- Acadian Flycatcher:** 1-4 were found in Appanoose, Lee, Marion, Scott, Van Buren, and Winneshiek counties. Eight were at Effigy Mounds N.M. on 9 Jul (DC). One heard at Call S.P. in late Jun (MCK) was on the edge of its range.
- Alder Flycatcher:** There were the usual late spring migrants including singles at Norwalk on 6 Jun (AMJ) and Ames and Walnut Creek N.W.R. on 7 Jun (JJD).
- Willow Flycatcher:** 1-6 were found in Appanoose, Bremer, Butler, Cerro Gordo, Clay, Dallas, Johnson, Louisa, Palo Alto, Polk, Pottawattamie, Story, Wayne, Winneshiek, and Worth counties.
- Least Flycatcher:** Other than 3 males at Highlandville, Winneshiek Co. on 12 Jun (DC), all reports were of single birds. Besides those in northern counties (Bremer, Worth) there were reports from Coralville Res. on 14, 27 Jun (THK) and Norwalk all summer (AMJ).
- Western Kingbird:** Other than the expected birds in western Iowa, a brood at the state capitol grounds in Des Moines in July (HZ, BKP, LJP, BE) and 1 sw. of Glidden, Greene Co. on 7 Jun (PA, RA) were somewhat out-of-range.
- Scissor-tailed Flycatcher:** I received a late report of 1 near Castana, Monona Co. on 30 May (Susan Floy, details, fide JJD).
- Horned Lark:** Petersen noted a 50% decline of those seen on BBS routes in Cedar and Clinton counties since 1990 (PCP).
- Purple Martin:** Mosman called it the worst year ever with 64 pairs compared to 90 last year. The cold weather and rain led to high losses of young birds (DDM).
- Cliff Swallow:** 300 at Saylorville on 23 Jul (LPH) was most noted.
- Brown Creeper:** 2 territorial birds at Huron Island, Des Moines Co. on 9 Jun (PCP) and 1 at Big Marsh, Butler Co. on 19 Jun (MPR) were the only reports.
- Carolina Wren:** This was the best summer in recent memory for this species. Besides a family group of 3 near Ames (DE), I received reports of 1 or 2 birds from Allamakee, Boone, Des Moines, Jasper, Jefferson, Johnson, Lee, Marion, Marshall, Muscatine, Pottawattamie, Scott, and Van Buren counties.
- Bewick's Wren:** 1 or 2 were found in Lacey-Keosauqua S.P. (MPR, AMJ) and Lee Co. (MPR) in June.
- Sedge Wren:** Many were in the Saylorville area (BE).
- Blue-gray Gnatcatcher:** A nest along the Big Sioux R. in Lyon Co. on 5 Jun (DCH) was out of this species' usual range as was a female at Kettleson Hogsback W.A., Dickinson Co. on 20 Jul (LAS). A few were also at Call S.P., (MCK) and Kuhn W.A., Cerro Gordo Co. (CN), on the edge of its usual range.
- Eastern Bluebird:** Mosman had 90 nests with eggs and 275 fledglings at Elkhart, the most ever (DDM) while 5 nests at Rippey was also a record high (SRL).
- Veery:** Several were along the upper reaches of Saylorville Res. (LPH); singles were reported at Ledges S.P. (HZ), Holst F. (MPR, BPR), Algona (MCK), and near Burt, Kossuth Co. (MCK).
- Swainson's Thrush:** 2 in Mason City on 1 Jun (RGo) were late migrants.
- Wood Thrush:** Other than 7 heard at Effigy Mounds N.M. on 9 Jul (DC), all other reports were singles; in Boone, Cerro Gordo, Dallas, Floyd, Franklin, Lee, Van Buren, and Worth counties. Engebretsen found none on the west side of Saylorville Res., an area where 7 were typically found in the mid 1980s.
- Northern Mockingbird:** 4 n. of Montpelier, Muscatine Co. on 24 Jul (PCP) and singles in Johnson Co. on 13, 14 Jun (JLF, DRP) and near Indianola on 8 Jul (AMJ) were all the reports.
- Cedar Waxwing:** Zaletel thought they were abundant in Story Co. (HZ).
- Loggerhead Shrike:** Birds were reported from Boone, Cass, Cerro Gordo (brood), Floyd, Fremont (2 sites with broods), Hardin, Mills (brood), Polk (brood), Pottawattamie, Poweshiek, Story (brood), Van Buren, and Wapello counties, about typical for summer.
- White-eyed Vireo:** 1-3 in Dallas, Lee, and Polk counties were the only reports.

**Bell's Vireo:** The 6 or 7 at Big Creek S.P. on 18 Jun, 11 Jul (BE, JC) were the most reported. The 1-3 found in Appanoose, Fremont, Jefferson, Johnson, Louisa, Muscatine, Polk, Pottawattamie, Scott, Story, and Wayne counties encompass the southern half of Iowa.

**Yellow-throated Vireo:** 1-3 were found in Allamakee, Boone, Butler, Dallas, Hardin, Kossuth, Lee, Polk, Van Buren, Winneshiek, and Worth counties. An adult was feeding a young cowbird at Des Moines on 13 Jul (BE).

**Philadelphia Vireo:** 1 at Mason City on 5 Jun (JLW, details)[record latest] was late.

**Blue-winged Warbler:** Up to 4 in Shimek F. in June (AMJ) was the highest count. Singles were s. of Madrid in Dallas Co. on 7 Jun (LPH) and in Appanoose Co. on 13 Jun (RLC).

**Nashville Warbler:** 1 at Norwalk on 2 Jun (AMJ)[2nd latest] was late.

**Northern Parula:** 1-4 were reported from Appanoose, Boone, Johnson, Marion, Polk, Van Buren, and Warren counties, all in the southeast quarter of the state. Three males and a female at L. Macbride, Johnson Co. represent a local range extension (DRP, THK).

**Chestnut-sided Warbler:** 1 at Norwalk on 2 Jun (AMJ) may have been a late migrant while a pair copulating at Lansing W.A., Allamakee Co. on 25 Jun (DK) must represent a breeding pair. The only other report was 1 in Appanoose Co. on 13 Jun (Tom Johnson fide RLC).

**Black-throated Green Warbler:** A male singing in Ames on 16 Jun (JJD, details)[record latest] was unexpected and the first mid-summer record for Iowa.

**Yellow-throated Warbler:** Besides the usual 1 or 2 at Ledges S.P. and Lacey-Keosauqua S.P., 1 was at Red Rock Res. on 8 Jul (AMJ). All records were from the Des Moines River Valley.

**Prairie Warbler:** 1 was reported from the Croton Unit, Shimek S.F. until 18 Jul (MPr, AMJ, RIC).

**Bay-breasted Warbler:** 1 at Call S.P. on 7 Jun (MCK)[record latest] was late.

**Cerulean Warbler:** 5 near Ames (Bill Norris fide JJD) and 3 at Effigy Mounds N.M. on 6 Jun (DC) were the most reported. All others were singles from Boone, Hardin, Johnson, Kossuth, Marion, Polk, Story, and Warren counties. Near Saylorville Res., Engebretsen found only 1 bird where there had been 5 in recent years.

**Black-and-white Warbler:** A male at Waubonsie S.P. on 27 Jun (JSi) was the only report.

**American Redstart:** 8 at Effigy Mounds and 7 at Cardinal M. were the most reported. Other reports were from Allamakee, Appanoose, Cerro Gordo, Kossuth, and Polk counties.

**Prothonotary Warbler:** A nest with young was found in NW Louisa Co. on 11 Jul (James Huntington fide THK) and a brood was seen at Effigy Mounds N.M. on 4 Jul (DC). One at Kettleson Hogsback W.A. on 3 Jul (M. Schubert fide LAS) was at the same site where a brood was found last year and out of its usual range. Likewise birds at Algona (MCK) and Ventura (RGo, JLW) were also at the edge of its range. Other reports were from Appanoose, Fremont, and Polk counties.

**Worm-eating Warbler:** 1 at Croton Unit, Shimek F. on 20 Jun and 18 Jul (AMJ, RIC) was the only report.

**Ovenbird:** As many as 8 were found in Boone, Dallas, Floyd, Hardin, Kossuth, Lee, Polk, and Van Buren counties.

**Louisiana Waterthrush:** A nest with eggs at Leverton Timber, Hardin Co. on 18 Jun (MPr) was a local first. The only other reports were singles in Lee and Van Buren counties.

**Kentucky Warbler:** 1-3 were found in Allamakee, Appanoose, Dallas, Jefferson, Lee, Marion, and Pottawattamie counties.

**Mourning Warbler:** A male at Coralville Res. on 6 Jun (JLF) and 1 near Algona on 7 Jun (MCK) were late.

**Common Yellowthroat:** Counts on BBS in Cedar and Clinton counties were a third of what they were in 1990 (PCP).

**Hooded Warbler:** A male at Croton Unit, Shimek F. on 20 Jun and 18 Jul (AMJ, RIC) was the only report.

**Canada Warbler:** A late migrant was in Davenport on 4 Jun (PCP).

**Yellow-breasted Chat:** 1 or 2 were found in Appanoose, Clinton, Des Moines, Johnson, Lee, Louisa, and Warren counties.

**Summer Tanager:** 1 or 2 at Lacey-Keosauqua S.P. in early June (AMJ, MPr), 1 in Shimek F. on 21 Jun (DRP), and a pair at Lambs Grove, Jasper Co. (GJB) were the only reports.

**Scarlet Tanager:** 1-4 were reported from Allamakee, Boone, Dallas, Floyd, Hardin, Kossuth, Lee, Polk, Van Buren, and Winneshiek counties, more than most recent years. None were found on the west side of Saylorville Res.; 1 or 2 are there most years (BE).

**Blue Grosbeak:** As many as 3 were seen in Shimek S.F. in SE Iowa (AMJ, RIC). An immature in W Dickinson Co. on 21 Jul (LAS) and several in Ida Co. (PE) were on the eastern fringes of the species' western Iowa range.



**Dickcissel:** Most observers thought numbers were down a bit this year, and numbers were down from 1990 on BBS in Cedar and Clinton counties (PCP). However, Carter thought numbers were up somewhat in NE Iowa.

**Clay-colored Sparrow:** 3 responded to a tape of their song at Shell Rock Preserve, Cerro Gordo Co. (CJF, JLW) for the only report.

**Lark Sparrow:** There were the usual scattered reports; 1 or 2 in Boone, Dallas, Ida, Johnson, Plymouth, and Wapello counties.

**Henslow's Sparrow:** Up to 4 were seen at the usual field w. of Lacey-Keosauqua S.P. on Jun (MPR, AMJ, m.ob.)

**Yellow-headed Blackbird:** Carter thought numbers were down at Cardinal M. (DC).

**Great-tailed Grackle:** 1 or 2 near L. Manawa on 1, 17 Jun (THK, TEB), a female at Dunbar Slough, Greene Co. on 26 Jul (JSi), and a late report of a male in NE Carroll Co. in late May (Stephen Reinart fide JJD) were the only reports.

**Orchard Oriole:** Besides family groups in Polk Co. on 23 Jul (LPH) and near Rock Falls, Cerro Gordo Co. on 24 Jul (CN), the only other reports were 1 at Croton Unit, Shimek F. (AMJ) and 1 in NW Dallas Co. (LPH).

**House Finch:** Harr said it was nesting in virtually every town in NW Iowa, suggesting it has completed its invasion of Iowa.

**House Sparrow:** 3 were watched drinking spilled antifreeze in Fairfield (CAA); remove that method from your list of ways to control this species.

**Eurasian Tree Sparrow:** 5 males at the usual site n. of Burlington on 5 Jul (DRP) were the first summer report in Iowa.

## COMMENT

This was the summer of the pelican. I received more reports of more American White Pelicans from more parts of Iowa than ever before. There are several possible explanations: widespread nesting failure on its breeding grounds, lack of suitable habitat due to the continuing drought in at least parts of the Dakotas (although water conditions were reported to be good in southern Canada), or good nesting success in recent years leading to more nonbreeding birds summering in Iowa. Whatever the cause, it is enjoyable to see these spectacular birds throughout Iowa. Will they eventually nest?

Many Iowa birders routinely travel to Florida, Arizona, Colorado, and other states to lengthen their life lists. In doing so, one is left with the impression that there is little of interest or exciting to be seen in Iowa. Thus it was reassuring to watch ornithologists from California, Arizona, and Ohio on birding trips at the A.O.U. meeting this June. Some of the species that they specifically wanted to see were Dickcissel, Red-headed Woodpecker, and Yellow-headed Blackbird, ho-hum birds for us jaded Iowa birders.

There was both good and bad news this summer. Besides some of the unusual nesting species, it was pleasing to see the continued recovery of Bald Eagles and Carolina Wrens. There were a number of reports of some of the neotropical migrants including both cuckoos, Cerulean Warbler, Northern Parula, and Bell's Vireo. On the negative side, both Least Tern and Piping Plover had no nesting success this summer.

## CONTRIBUTORS

Carol A. Alexander (CAA), Fairfield; Pam Allen (PA), West Des Moines; Reid Allen (RA), West Des Moines; Robert Berry, (RBe), Iowa City; Gordon J. Brand (GJB), Newton; Tanya E. Bray (TEB), Bellevue, NE; Dennis Carter (DC), Decorah; John Cecil (JC), Des Moines; Robert I. Cecil (RIC), Des Moines; Raymond L. Cummins (RLC), Centerville; David L. Dankert (DLD), Cedar Rapids; James J. Dinsmore (JJD), Ames; Stephen J. Dinsmore (SJD), Raleigh, NC;

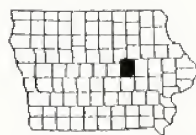
Jim Durbin (JiD), Marion; David Edwards (DE), Ames; Bery Engebretsen (BE), Des Moines; Peter Emzen (PE), Ida Grove; Carolyn J. Fischer (CF), Mason City; James L. Fuller (JF), Iowa City; Rita Goranson (RGo), Mason City; Douglas C. Hart (DH), Larchwood; L. Paul Hertzell (LPH), Ames; Ann M. Johnson (AMJ), Norwalk; Matt C. Kenne (MCK), Algona; Thomas H. Kent (THK), Iowa City; Darwin Koenig (DK), Ankeny; Sharon R. Laub (SRL), Rippey; Mike Lillie (ML), Ames; Darwin Dean Mosman (DDM), Elkhart; Curt Nelson (CN), Mason City; Babs K. Padelford (BKP), Bellevue, NE; Loren J. Padelford (LJP), Bellevue, NE; Marietta A. Petersen (MAP), Walnut; Peter C. Petersen (PCP), Davenport; D. Randall Pinkston (DRP), Iowa City; Don Poggensee (DPo), Ida Grove; Diane C. Porter (DCP), Fairfield; Beth Proescholdt (BPr), Liscomb; Mark Proescholdt (MPr), Liscomb; Lee A. Schoenewe (LAS), Spencer; Jim Sinclair (JSi), Indianola; Mike Stegman (MS), Garwin; Iowa City; Jan L. Walters (JLW), Mason City; Hank Zaletel (HZ), Colo.

4024 Arkansas Dr., Ames, IA 50010

## NESTING SANDHILL CRANES AT OTTER CREEK MARSH, TAMA COUNTY

DON POGGENSEE

I received a call on 5 June 1992 from Pat Schlarbaum of the Iowa D.N.R. non-game office, telling me of reports that Sandhill Cranes with young had been seen east of Tama at Otter Creek Marsh. Pat knew of my interest in the Sandhill Cranes and my desire to photograph them.



That noon I called Ed Weiner at the Otter Creek Unit for more information. He confirmed that indeed they had been seeing Sandhill Cranes with young on and near the marsh, and I was welcome to come attempt to photograph them.

After work that night, my wife Pam and I drove from Ida Grove to Ed's office at Otter Creek Marsh east of Tama. Meeting Ed early the next morning in the rain, he drove us around Otter Creek and we saw one pair with two young and a second pair about a mile away to the northwest. All the birds were a long distance from us feeding in newly planted corn fields near the edge of the marsh.

Looking the area over I decided that I might be able to approach the pair with the two young by following a drainage ditch that was on the north side of the corn field that they were feeding in. We found the owner of the farm field and got permission.

Most of the rest of Saturday, 6 June 1992 I waited in a small group of trees in the drainage ditch hoping to see the cranes. Near the middle of the afternoon I was able to see and photograph them for a short time from a long distance away using a 700 MM Canon lens. Near sunset I backed out of my hiding place and returned to my Winnebago and my ever patient wife.

I decided that if I could get into my blind before or near sunrise the next morning, I would be in a good spot for better photos with clear weather. As we drove into Tama that night for dinner we talked about getting an early start the next morning and praying that the Sandhills would be using the same field again.



Very early the next morning June 7th, found me walking the half mile into the blind area and getting my blind set-up ready to record Iowa's first documented nesting of Sandhill Cranes since 1894.

As the sun was rising with enough good light, a pair of Sandhill Cranes with their two young appeared in front of me very near where I had seen them the night before. They stayed in the field and fed there for most of the morning. I was able to get several good images (see cover photo). At about 11 a.m. I heard cranes calling from another farm field quite close and behind me. I quickly backed out of my blind and crossed the drainage ditch in time to see a second pair of sandhills with one young heading back into the marsh. The wet grass that I had crawled through was about waist high, and I was able to photograph the second pair before they disappeared into the marsh.

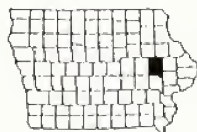
Sandhill Cranes were a common nesting species in north-central and northwestern Iowa when settlers first arrived. Because of hunting and habitat loss, their numbers dwindled rapidly. The last known Sandhill Crane nest in Iowa was found northwest of Hayfield in Hancock County (Anderson, R. M. *The Oologist* 11:263-264, 1894) in 1894. Thus it was a great joy to see Sandhill Cranes with young again in Iowa after a 98-year absence. I spent a total of 13 hours over two days to photograph the cranes. Ed Weiner was a big help in locating the area the cranes were using and for allowing us to stay overnight at the Unit Headquarters.

*R.R. #1, Ida Grove, IA 51445*

## PACIFIC LOON AT PLEASANT CREEK

JIM FULLER

John Daniel and Pete Wickham of Cedar Rapids reported a loon that they identified as a Pacific Loon at Pleasant Creek State Recreation Area, Linn County, the morning of 9 November 1991. With kickoff time for a Hawkeye home football game imminent, I frantically searched the lake, and finally located a loon near the west shore. Tom Kent had preceded me, and was already scoping the loon. The bird was only about 100 yards away, and I wasted little time getting my scope on it.



Size was difficult to judge, because there were no other waterfowl with which to compare it, but it appeared to be smaller than a Common Loon, with correspondingly smaller head and thinner neck. The first feature that I noticed was a very sharp delineation on the side of the neck between the white foreneck and dark hindneck. Another notable early perception was a very round or bowed back of the head and neck. The previous week I had seen numerous Pacific Loons in alternate plumage in Washington state, birds which exhibited a whitish gray hindneck. Even though this bird was in basic plumage, when it turned its head just right, there was a silvery gray sheen to the back of the head and neck. The bill was straight, dark, and dagger-like.

The back was a dark gray color, and no white checking or barring was seen. On the head and face, the dark eye was just into the gray of the crown, and when the bird was facing me, I could see a narrow line or chinstrap which originated at the throat or angle between the head and neck. The bird was seen diving, but no vocalization was heard.

Features which separate this species from the Common Loon are size, and proportionately smaller head, neck, and bill. The sharp delineation of the light and dark on the side of the neck compares to a patterned side of the neck without a sharp delineation in Common Loon. In addition, Common Loon is lightly colored all the way around the eye and lacks a chinstrap. Red-throated Loon has a smaller bill, which often appears to be upturned, has white all the way around the eye, and the side of the neck is more patterned and not so sharply defined, all features which differed from this bird. Yellow-billed Loon is even larger than Common Loon, and has a distinctive large light-colored bill.

The bird obligingly remained for many observers to view through the following weekend, and was last reported on 19 November. An added attraction was the presence of Black-legged Kittiwake, and White-winged and Surf scoters on the lake. I had two more opportunities to study the bird, at which time excellent views of the chinstrap were gained.

Prior to 1982 there were seven Iowa records for this species, which nests in the Arctic and winters primarily along the west coast. In recent years, one or two sightings have been recorded in the state annually, most in the period October-December, with a few in April-May.

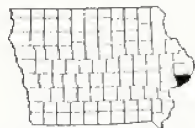
I found "Advanced Birding" (Kenn Kaufmann, Houghton Mifflin, Boston, 1990) to be especially useful in comparing the loons in basic plumage. And yes, I was in my Kinnick Stadium seat for kickoff.

*6 Longview Knoll, NE, Iowa City, IA 52240*

## SABINE'S GULLS AT THE QUAD CITIES

RANDALL PINKSTON

At 2 p.m. on 13 October 1991 Richard Peiser of Glen Ellyn, Illinois, observed what he suspected was an immature Sabine's Gull from a Mississippi River casino boat at Davenport, Scott County, Iowa. Later that afternoon he relocated the bird with an adult and confirmed the identification. He reported the birds to the Iowa Bird Line. The following morning Jim Fuller relocated the adult downstream from the original site.



Early that afternoon I arrived where Fuller had observed the adult. Tom Kent, Dick Tetrault and Jim Scheib joined me and together we were unable to find the birds there. At 2 p.m., on the advice of Pete Petersen, we directed our search upstream past the Highway 74 bridge in Moline, Rock Island County, Illinois. There we joined others in viewing both birds for extended periods at the Moline riverfront and across the river in Bettendorf, Iowa.

The adult (Figure 1) was in worn alternate plumage with a dark gray head and black collar. White flecking was noted on the crown at close range. The small bill was black at the base with bright yellow tip. No eye-ring was discerned. The underparts were entirely white as were the nape and neck, the rump, uppertail coverts, and forked tail. The back and scapulars were plain gray continuous with the gray of the tertials and wing coverts. The back appeared slightly paler ("frosted") relative to the coverts on the floating bird. The spread wing pattern was distinctive with secondaries, inner primary coverts, and inner primaries bright white, forming a white triangle between the gray coverts proximally and the black outer primary coverts and outer primaries distally. Narrow white "mirrors" were



noted on the outer primaries at close range. The underwing appeared white except for a black trailing edge distally.

The juvenile (Figure 2) displayed the same striking upperwing pattern except that the adult's gray was replaced with mottled grayish-brown; this brown extended from the crown and face to the lower back and onto the sides of the breast. The fresh outer primaries were tipped with white. The forehead, rump, uppertail coverts, and entire underparts were white. The bill was all black. The forked white tail had a bold black subterminal band beyond which the rectrices were narrowly tipped with white.

These were small gulls between one-half and two-thirds the size of nearby Ring-billed Gulls. They were high-riding on the water with head and neck held erect, the wingtips angled upward. Their flight, aptly described as tern-like, was often close to the water's surface. Richard Peiser heard both birds utter "squeaky" noises.



Figure 1. Adult Sabine's Gull at Bettendorf, 14 October 1991. Photo by Tom Kent.



Figure 2. Juvenile Sabine's Gull at Bettendorf, 14 October 1991. Photo by Tom Kent.

Apparently the juvenile departed the following day while the adult remained through 26 October. Seen well, the striking upperwing pattern of Sabine's Gull is diagnostic in all plumages. The most often cited similar species is first-winter Black-legged Kittiwake which is larger and mainly white-headed.

Sabine's Gull is a circumpolar breeder that winters at sea in the southern hemisphere. Birds nesting in Canada and Greenland migrate diagonally southeast across the north Atlantic Ocean to wintering areas off the coast of southwest Africa, while those nesting in Siberia and Alaska migrate in the eastern Pacific Ocean to areas off South America (Grant 1986). Adults arrive on their breeding grounds in May/June and depart with juveniles in July/August. Most young birds spend their first summer south of the equator and depart with other adults the following April/May (Harrison 1983).

That some birds, mostly juveniles, migrate through central North America is well known (Kent 1983). A review of *American Birds* Regional Reports demonstrates a dramatic increase in Sabine's Gull sightings in recent years. The

majority of these are equally divided over September and October with a smaller but substantial number from 1-15 November. Fall sightings are most likely in the Great Lakes region. A small peak also occurs in May/June, most often from Ontario and the Prairie Provinces. It is uncertain whether the increased sightings represent an expanding population or greater observer effort.

Sabine's Gull is listed as accidental in Iowa (Kent and Bendorf 1991) with only four sightings prior to 1982 (Kent 1983, Dinsmore et al. 1984). Juveniles were collected near Burlington on 15 October 1891 and 12 October 1894. Another juvenile was taken in Scott County prior to 1933 (date unknown). A probable adult was seen briefly at Clear Lake on 25 September 1970. The six sightings since then, including those reported here, span the state east to west and were all seen in late September-November. A juvenile was found at Saylorville Reservoir on 10 November 1983 (Kent 1983), remaining through 20 November. Juveniles were also seen there on 5 October 1986 (Bendorf 1987) and on 20 October 1988 (Bendorf 1989). The last sightings before those described here were single juveniles observed at two unexpected locations on consecutive days. The first was found along a roadside pecking at a road-killed swallow in Fremont County on 24 September 1989, the second at Diamond Lake in Poweshiek County the next day (Bendorf 1990).

Thanks to Tom Kent, Jim Fuller, and Carl Bendorf for providing references and helpful information in the preparation of this paper.

#### LITERATURE CITED

- Bendorf, C. J. 1987. Field reports-fall 1986. *Iowa Bird Life* 57:12-24.  
Bendorf, C. J. 1989. Field reports-fall 1988. *Iowa Bird Life* 59:8-18.  
Bendorf, C. J. 1990. Field reports-fall 1989. *Iowa Bird Life* 60:10-19.  
Dinsmore, J. J., T. H. Kent, D. Koenig, P. C. Petersen, and D. M. Roosa. 1984. *Iowa Birds*. Iowa State University Press, Ames. 356 p.  
Grant, P. J. 1986. *Gulls: A Guide to Identification*. second ed. Buteo Books, Vermillion, SD. 352 pp.  
Harrison, P. 1983. *Seabirds: An Identification Guide*. Houghton Mifflin Co., Boston. 448 pp.  
Kent, T. H. 1983. Sabine's Gull at Saylorville Reservoir. *Iowa Bird Life* 53:105-106.  
Kent, T. H., and C. J. Bendorf. 1991. Official Checklist of Iowa Birds 1991 edition. *Iowa Bird Life* 61:101-109.

526 Reno St., Iowa City, IA 52245.

#### INTERACTIONS BETWEEN A SNOW GOOSE AND A CANADA GOOSE

MATT C. KENNE

Upon arrival at the north pool of Union Slough National Wildlife Refuge just before 9 a.m. on 29 March 1992, I observed a blue-phase Snow Goose swimming near a Canada Goose. I saw the Snow Goose pick at the back of the Canada Goose with its bill, then at the flank, and then





at the bill of the Canada Goose. The Canada Goose then dipped its head and neck several times into the water, at which time I began to record their actions.

The birds swam slowly across the pool from east to west. The Snow Goose closely followed every move of the Canada Goose staying parallel or slightly behind it, separated by about 1-2 feet. The Canada vocalized normally, but the Snow Goose gave repeated calls toward the Canada with wings slightly raised, neck extended, and bill raised. On five occasions, the Snow Goose swam up from the side and called directly in the "face" of the Canada Goose. The Canada showed no response other than turning its head away from the Snow Goose.

The Canada Goose halted and began to preen while on the water. The Snow Goose paddled to hold position in the 10-20 mph wind, never more than about five feet away. The Snow Goose preened very little, but watched the Canada Goose closely. The Snow Goose then swam to the side of the Canada Goose, raised its wings and neck back past vertical, and called while apparently pushing the other bird with its breast.

The birds resumed swimming as before along the south shore, at times walking together through shallow water. The birds passed within ten feet of a pair of Canada Geese without response from either bird. The Snow Goose swam ahead of the Canada twice, but didn't "lead" as much as try to keep ahead by responding to the Canada's changes of direction. At 9:35 the birds stepped out onto a muskrat lodge where both began to preen.

At 9:45 the pair of Canada Geese rushed the lodge, forcing the Snow Goose and single Canada to fly back onto the water. The birds swam along the cattails as before with four more occasions of the Snow Goose calling in the face of the Canada and two instances of the Snow Goose "leading". At 10:05 the birds went ashore again to preen, at which time I left.

On 15 April, Bobbi Webber, Assistant Refuge Manager, told me that the Snow and Canada goose pair were first seen on the refuge on 23 March and were still together on 15 April. She believed that the Snow Goose was the male and the Canada Goose was the female, which agreed with my impressions. The Canada Goose had a higher-pitched female voice. The actions of these two birds are suggestive of the courtship behavior shown by these two species. Although the birds were still present on 4 May, neither the refuge personnel nor I saw any evidence of any actual nesting attempt by the pair.

I appreciate the help of Bobbi Webber in preparing this note.

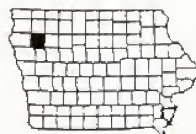
*709 N. Phillips, Algona, IA 50511*

## SWAINSON'S HAWK FALLOUT IN CHEROKEE COUNTY

DICK BIERMAN

On 19 April 1992 at 7 a.m., I was traveling south of Cherokee on U.S. 59. About 5 miles from Cherokee I noticed several hawks on fence posts along the highway. As I pulled over to look more closely, I saw more on the ground. Using my spotting scope I realized that they were Swainson's

Hawks. I counted 53 from that location. Moving on south for another 2 miles and then west I counted about 18 more. I then crossed the Little Sioux River at Quimby and drove north. I soon encountered more Swainson's. I stopped and



counted 167 from that location noting that there was a hawk on 43 consecutive fence posts.

I immediately contacted Marion Brewer who went to the above mentioned locations and verified the numbers and species as Swainson's. As soon as Marion got back home a farmer called to say that he had 79 hawks in his field. This location was about 3 miles northwest from the largest group of hawks we saw. Adding them all up, I estimate that we saw between 300 and 325 Swainson's hawks, and I am sure we missed a few.

The day was wet, cloudy, and calm. The previous day had been very rainy. Nightcrawlers were everywhere. We watched many of the hawks picking up and eating the worms. It was a great situation to view all of the color variations from normal to melanistic. Most had left the area by 1:30 p.m.

901 Harris, Cherokee, IA 51012

## I.O.U. BUSINESS

### SPRING BUSINESS MEETING

Shueyville, Saturday 16 May 1992, 4:15-5:20 p.m.

**PRESIDING: ANN M. BARKER, PRESIDENT**

**HILDA SICKELS, SECRETARY**

The meeting was opened with special thanks to the Cedar Rapids Audubon Society for hosting and organizing the weekend.

Minutes for the 14 September 1991 business had been published (*Iowa Bird Life* 62:26-27). They were approved as published.

Treasurer: Complete financial statements for 1991, including a balance sheet, statement of support, revenues and expenses, membership information, and the 1992 budget were distributed. The report was accepted.

#### **Committee Reports**

Records: Tom Kent reported that all 1991 records have been reviewed. The annual report will be published in *Iowa Bird Life*.

Membership: Membership brochures were recently updated and reprinted and are available to members.

Publications: The committee will meet after the business meeting.

Breeding Bird Atlas: Species accounts and map production are in progress. The committee is in the process of appointing an editor. Methods of fundraising for publication costs have been discussed.

Education: Rick Hollis reported that the educational booklet on Iowa Birds for mid-elementary level students will be printed in late summer. The price will be \$1 or \$2 per copy.

Spring Count: The original ad hoc committee had not submitted progress reports since its formation. At its April meeting, the Board expressed concern about data compilation, publication space and costs, and the lack of a thorough plan for the project. At the Board's suggestion, the president dissolved the original committee and formed another to formulate a specific plan, including provisions for submitting, compiling, and publishing the data. Cost estimates are to be included in the plan. The Board will review the committee's proposal before implementation. The new committee is Pete Petersen (chair), Bob Cecil, and Ross Silcock.

I.O.U. Display: The display has been used at several recent exhibits and will be set up at the American Ornithologists' Union meeting at Ames in June.

Birdline: Calls to the Birdline have increased this year to 20-30 per week; updates are more frequent as well. The annual report will be published in *I.O.U. News*.



## Old Business

Upcoming meetings: Plans are set for the fall meeting to be held at Lansing on 11-13 September. Bob Cecil has made tentative arrangements for the spring 1993 meeting to be held in Keosauqua on 30 April-2 May. It was moved (Ray Cummins, seconded by Hank Zaletel) to accept the proposal to hold the meeting on those dates. Motion carried. The fall 1993 meeting will be held in western Iowa.

Field trips: Virtually all I.O.U. field trips have been well attended. The consensus of the Board was that we should continue to offer them. Ann Johnson has proposed the formation of a field trip committee to organize four or more field trips per year. It was moved (Carol Thompson, seconded by Jim Fuller) that the President appoint such a committee. Motion carried.

Jim Sheib has proposed the use of a computer bulletin board which would provide access to birding information across the country. Several members indicated interest; seven indicated they had or would be willing to purchase a modem to tie in to the system. A demonstration will be provided at the fall meeting.

The American Ornithologists' Union will hold its annual meeting in Ames 24-27 June. I.O.U. members were encouraged to attend and/or volunteer to help at the meeting.

## New Business

The nominating committee (Carol Thompson-chair, Pete Petersen, and Ray Cummins) presented the following slate for consideration for election to office: Secretary-Hilda Sickels; Treasurer-Pam Allen; Board of Directors-Eloise Armstrong and Rick Hollis. Barker opened the floor for additional nominations for secretary. There were none, and Hilda Sickels was elected. The floor was opened for additional nominations for treasurer. There were none, and Pam Allen was elected. Barker called for further nominations for the Board of Directors. None were made, and Eloise Armstrong and Rick Hollis were elected directors.

Pete Petersen proposed a statewide rare bird alert system for birds seen 10 or fewer times in Iowa, to assure that interested birders would be notified of sightings immediately. He proposed a \$10 fee to defray long-distance telephone costs for Jim Fuller who, as Birdline monitor, would initiate the telephone chain. Considerable discussion ensued; sentiment varied widely about the need for such a system. Only 4 or 5 people indicated interest in it. No action was taken.

The Board of Directors recommended to the membership that the dues structure remain the same for 1993. Jim Dinsmore moved (second Pam Allen) that the dues structure remain as proposed by the Board. Motion carried.

The Board asked for input from the membership on whether the I.O.U. mailing list should be sold to commercial enterprises, academic publishers, or both and, if so, for what uses. John Fleckenstein moved (second Tom Kent) to suggest to the Board that a policy be established to consider whether the list would be sold on a case by case basis, and that any decision to sell the list be kept relevant to Iowa birders. Motion carried.

Jim Dinsmore announced that several long-time I.O.U. members have died recently: Lillian Serbousek, Cedar Rapids, member since 1931; Helen Peasley, Des Moines, member since 1934; Fred Pierce, Winthrop, first editor of *Iowa Bird Life* and the last surviving charter member of the organization; and Myrle Burk, Cedar Falls, a life member and former I.O.U. Secretary-Treasurer. He reminded members that Philip DuMont, a member since 1924 and author of a 1933 book on Iowa birds now resides in Chapel Hill, NC.

## BOOK REVIEW

**Birds of Missouri: their distribution and abundance** by Mark B. Robbins and David A. Easterla. Univ. of Missouri Press, Columbia, MO., 1992, 399 pp., hardbound \$59.95. Robbins and Easterla's "Birds of Missouri" is a good desk reference for Midwestern ornithologists and birdwatchers. "Birds of Missouri" provides the most recent update on the status, abundance, and distribution of all birds (breeders, migrants, and accidentals) sighted in Missouri during historical and present times. The authors used information that was available as recently as summer 1990 in their species accounts. The accounts are highly readable, except for the abbreviations which appear to be "necessary evils" for documenting observations. Fortunately, the authors have used complete sentences among the abbreviations to relay information.

The book's format is "user-friendly". The authors begin the book with an introduction that I found educational and helpful in understanding the patterns of bird distribution within the state. The introduction contains details about the history of ornithology in Missouri, the natural communities and physiographic regions of Missouri, the pre-European settlement condition of natural communities, Missouri's climate, and the current landscape of Missouri. The authors also describe the sources of data and information they used (e.g., U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service Breeding Bird Survey data). The authors also take great pains to describe and define the terms used in their book. If one can wait to examine tables which are first mentioned four pages earlier in the text, the introduction is worth reading before launching into the species accounts.

The format of the species accounts is easy to follow and allows the reader to quickly locate desired information. The species accounts contain information on status, habitat, and occurrence during spring migration, summer, fall migration, and winter. The authors also report what documents were used as evidence of the species' occurrence (specimen, photographs, etc.). Almost half of the species have a comments section that provides historical information or current data. The authors also use the comments section to describe official state and federal status of the species. Literature citations are provided at the end of each species account for those readers who desire to go to original sources, or may want to know more about identifying the species in the field.

Information within the species accounts is fairly thorough and up-to-date. I did note the authors missed an opportunity to report that, because of reintroduction efforts, Trumpeter Swans have nested at Mingo National Wildlife Refuge during the late 1980s. On the other hand, the authors were able to include Black-necked Stilts on the list of Missouri's breeding birds because three stilt nests were located in rice fields during summer 1990. One must give the authors credit for using data from Christmas Bird Counts, the Missouri Department of Conservation's Breeding Bird Atlas Project, and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Breeding Bird Surveys to determine a species' current status and distribution.

The inclusion of black and white bird photographs, and David Plank's pen and ink, and watercolor prints is a big plus for this book. Just having Plank's work in the book makes it very special. The prints and photographs also provide welcome visual breaks from the eventually monotonous text.

Overall, Robbins and Easterla's "Birds of Missouri" is an educational, readable, and valuable reference for biologists and serious birders. A reference such as this is needed because much has changed in Missouri's avifauna since the publication of Otto Widmann's 1907 reference, "Birds of Missouri".--Rochelle B. Renken, Missouri Dept. of Conservation, 1110 S. College Ave., Columbia, MO 65201.

